1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AVi Kashmir
Dard AV3

PUNIAL.

131 Four miles above the village and fort of Gilgit the valley narrows; still there is generally a bit of alluvial plateau on one side or other of the river; a few villages are passed and sites of deserted villages. For a day's march up one is still in the district of Gilgit, which is conterminous with the old Rajaship of Gilgit. Between the villages of Sharot and Gulpūr this district ends and Puniāl begins.*

648 642 Puniāl is a part of the valley which had long been held by separate Rajas, sometimes I think independent, sometimes depending on one or other of their neighbours—Yāsīn and Gilgit. The last result of the wars and disturbances that for some generations so much affected these valleys has been to leave Puniāl to a ruler of the line of its old Rajas, but under the protection of and in close dependence on, and, in those matters in which interference might be called for, in obedience to, the Maharaja of Kashmir. The district thus held is simply the line of the main valley, all along narrow, from Gulpūr up to the village and fort of Gākūj. This is a length of some 25 miles; within it there are nine villages and two or three outlying patches of ground cultivated from the nearest; these villages vary in altitude from 5500 feet to nearly 7000 feet; the chief place is Sher, on the left bank, where the Raja dwells. A characteristic of this part of the valley is that often, after every few miles, one comes to a place where the space is narrowed for a short distance by spurs coming down, so that the passage along is extremely difficult; the name given to these places is *darband*, or "shut-door"; they are of much importance from a military point of view, since at each of them a few might stop an army for a time; but there are usually two roads by which they can be passed—a very difficult one, fit only for agile foot-passengers, along the cliff, and a bridle-path that

361 133 725

* I believe that originally Gulpūr itself was under the Gilgit Rajas, and that it was granted to Puniāl in dowry of one of the daughters of the house. The present actual boundary between Gilgit and Puniāl is the stony and sandy plain between Sharot and Gulpūr.

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard AV3

133 way every fan has been formed, the stream which
132 made it cutting its way through its own fan to reach the river.

The mud flow of which we saw the traces was a mere baby; it had only covered rocks ten feet high in the stream bed, and made a miniature fan where it debouched, but its force was attested by the huge boulders it had moved. These mud flows come down with terrible rapidity and irresistible force, and with no further warning than a tremble of the ground like an earthquake and a grinding roar, followed immediately by the wall of mud and rock: man or beast caught in a ravine by them is lost. The peculiar formation so common in the Hindu-Kush by which a stream, with a catchment area perhaps thirty to fifty miles round, cuts its way into the main river through a gorge fifty feet wide, with walls several hundred feet in height, is what makes these mud
491 flows possible and so dangerous. No one who had not had his attention drawn to them would believe in their action. When making the road down to Chilas in 1893 I found a bridge being built over a ravine apparently in a perfectly safe situation about thirty feet above the bed. The engineer in charge would not believe that it could be unsafe till I showed him on the cliffs not fifty yards from the bridge traces of a mud flow, which I knew was only a year or so old, some thirty feet higher than his bridge site.

● 725 About twelve miles from Gilgit we passed lines of sungahs, stone breast-works, following the edge of the cliff above the river, and blocking the ravine heads leading into it, and asked their meaning. The road at this point dropped into the river bed, and led for a

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard AV3

few hundred yards along a flat sandy bank by the water's edge. We were told that the place was called "the fort of Bhoop Singh," from a Kashmir general of that name who, some forty years before, had marched up to the relief of Gilgit. Instead of pushing on to the high ground beyond, he had halted his men here, and had neglected to hold the heights. Immediately taking advantage of his folly, the insurgents who were beleaguering Gilgit came down during the night, seized both the paths leading up from the river bed, and built the sungahs we saw, while the Hunza-Nagar men came down and took up a position on the opposite bank. After some days of hopeless fighting the force, which numbered twelve hundred, was wiped out, every single man killed or carried off into slavery.

One could see the tragedy; the wretched men under a plunging fire, with inaccessible cliffs above them, and a raging torrent in front of them, badly equipped, badly led, and with nothing but death or worse staring them in the face. It was a useful reminder to all soldiers passing by. I never rode through the place without feeling the horror of the long past days of agony, and without having the difficulties and dangers of campaigning in such a country forcibly brought in on me. It would have saved us many a life before some years were over had all ranks, British and native, taken the lesson to heart. But it was not to be: each generation must apparently make the same mistakes, men will be reckless, and some apparently can only buy experience with the wasted blood of their men, and gain common-sense for themselves when it comes to them hand in hand with death.

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard AV3

The sizes of the stones forming the slope vary with the character of the rock and the length of the fall. You may pass through the foot of a slope by a path running over and amongst a heap of gigantic fragments weighing many tons each, or you may ride across a slope of fine slatey shingle which gives at every step, but wherever you cross a slope you generally find all the stones at that point very much the same size. Whenever there is heavy rain, or snow begins to melt in the spring, rock avalanches come down, and I have lain at night for hours listening to the thundering roar of great fragments plunging down from thousands of feet above one's camp. In the day-time you have to keep a sharp look-out when marching. There are many places well-known as extremely dangerous, in crossing which it is prudent not to loiter. I have never seen a man killed, but I have seen a man's leg broken a few yards in front of me by a falling stone, and have witnessed very narrow escapes. There was one particularly nasty stone shoot at Shaitan Nara, where stones fell all day long, the smaller whizzing by like a bullet, and the larger cannonading down in flying leaps, the last of which frequently carried them nearly across the Astor River. Starting stone avalanches on to an enemy below is a well understood and thoroughly appreciated form of warfare in these parts, and a very effectual means of offence it is.

A "parri" is a cliff, across the face of which the road is carried. These cliffs constantly occur, either where the hills close in on the river, or where a long alluvial fan projects into its bed. Rising sheer from

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard Av3
Chitral

644 were told of its wonders, how it could turn out
484 fourteen lakhs of rupees a day—a lakh is a hundred
177 thousand—how it coined every day in the year
[462] without cessation. The Kashmir officer with us, with what object it was not necessary to enquire (every man in his position must intrigue, and has an axe of his own to grind), capped these stories by informing the Chitralis that our rulers never were at a loss for the white metal, as we could turn copper into silver.

000 Altogether I soon saw that my prospects of satisfying everybody, or for the matter of that, anybody, were remote. My difficulties would have been much lightened in Chitral had Nizam and Afzul gone through, during their visit to India, a course of sight-seeing at some big military centre. Twenty thousand men on parade, "horse, foot, and dragoons," would have given them and their headmen a much more intelligent appreciation of what the power of the Government of India meant than could wandering about cotton and jute mills, or being driven through foul and crowded bazaars.

361 Between Mastuj and Chitral we found at Sanoghar,
311 Buni, and other places, miles of splendid cultivation, and we saw above us, on the right bank of the river,
487 the extensive fields of the Murikho valley. But
725 for the most part the road was, as before, extremely difficult; the last couple of marches it was purposely left in the worst condition, running through gorges and along cliffs on rickety brackets which could be destroyed in a moment.

133 Glacial action is again well marked below Mastuj, the road running over huge masses of rock, rounded,

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard AV3
Chitral

smoothed, and polished by the ice, and showing the characteristic surface scratchings. 133

Many "darbands" or positions were shown us, that on the Parabek plain being the most curious. The road runs across a huge fan once cultivated, now a desert owing to the failure of the stream which formed and watered the fan. Suddenly you come to a great ravine with perpendicular walls sixty to a hundred feet deep. The ravine runs without a break up into the mountains to the right, and into the river to the left; there is only one path leading down into it at its debouchure. Elsewhere one or two goat tracks exist, the heads of which are covered by sungahs. These sungahs, planted apparently without purpose in the open plain, are the first intimation you get of the existence of this ravine. This was the second position forced by Colonel Kelly on his march to the relief of Chitral, and it was carried by a turning movement to his right in the hills. It is the only position in the open that I ever came across in Chitral; it possessed great natural strength, but like all positions taken up with only the idea of passive resistance, it was of course doomed to fall to an enterprising enemy. An invading army from Badakshan had been here checked and defeated. 133 725

Below Parabek was position after position, and every day impressed me more with the difficulties of making war in this country, and with the danger to which isolated bodies must be exposed. A small body of troops moving in the valley could so easily, as our men found to their cost when Chitral was besieged in 1895, be headed by mountaineers using

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
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Chitral

133 paths thousands of feet above them, and would
725 then find themselves in a trap with the road cut on both sides of them, advance or retreat equally impossible.

Near Barnas there is a defile connected with one of the proudest days in Chitrali history. In Shah Katur's day the Badakshani ruler attacked him, and the invading army penetrated to Barnas. An envoy from the Mehtar met the conquering general in the gorge, threw himself at his feet, made complete submission on his master's part, and, clasping the conqueror's knees, he implored mercy, then with a sudden jerk hurled him off the road to plunge a hundred feet into the roaring torrent below. Both ends of the defile were in a moment in Chitrali hands, and the whole invading force, said to have numbered seven thousand men, was destroyed or taken prisoner.

181 It was impossible not to be taken with the Chitralis. Putting aside their avarice, which was but natural, and their cruelty and treachery amongst themselves, their nobles were pleasant men to meet, fond of sport, courteous and hospitable, and with a great love of their wild country. The people—that is, the freemen, not the slaves—were bright, cheery, impervious to fatigue, splendid mountaineers, fond of laughter and song, devoted to polo and dancing. The man striding along before your horse, with his loins girt, and the front end of his choga tucked into his waistband to give his legs free play, his chest open, and his shoulders thrown back by a sword carried across his back hooked into his elbows, would sing all the way uphill and down dale, and would